

**National Marine Sanctuary Program
Advisory Council Information Bulletin
April 2004**

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

On March 9, The Channel Islands Marine Mammal Sightings Database went live on the Channel Islands Web Site. With this database, an individual can record mammal sightings as well as search for them. The majority of sightings in the database were collected by Channel Islands Naturalist Corps Volunteers. The database records may date back as far as 1999.

On March 20, the sanctuary conducted a free one-day teacher workshop highlighting Long-term Monitoring Program and Experimental Training for Students (LiMPETS) rocky intertidal monitoring. Ten teachers/educators from Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties participated in the workshop. Participants learned about the ecology of rocky intertidal communities, monitoring techniques to study abundance and distribution of different target species, and classroom activities to prepare students for field monitoring. Participants were introduced to the Carpinteria State Beach rocky intertidal monitoring site, located species of interest, and practiced field-monitoring techniques to monitor different target populations. The goal was to familiarize participants with LiMPETS rocky intertidal monitoring protocols and procedures so that they are able to set up and monitor a rocky intertidal site with their students.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

On February 25, in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force presented the sanctuary's Resource Manager Lauri MacLaughlin with an award for her work at the Truman Mole Pier. Her dedicated work to rescue in excess of 2,400 colonies of coral and to distribute them to public aquariums, aquaculture facilities, and to coral scientists demonstrated an unprecedented effort to turn a potentially destructive project into a project with huge public benefits.

A partnership between the sanctuary, The Ocean Conservancy, and local businesses conducted The Adopt-A-Reef and Monofilament Line Clean Up. The businesses offer discount rates to divers who are willing to help clean up debris and monofilament line during their dive. The sanctuary provides clippers and bags for each buddy team. The Ocean Conservancy coordinates the event and provides a thank you gift, an insulated coffee mug. There are a record number of 26 businesses, clubs, and agencies participating in this spring clean-up.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary, Texas A&M University - Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences, and a University doctoral student are working to provide input into a survey that is being conducted under a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. The survey addresses attitudes of recreational divers towards management of coral reefs. They are using a technique termed 'discreet choice.' Respondents to the questionnaire are asked to make choices between specific management tools and outcomes, rather than simply indicating that they favor or oppose individual outcomes. For example, when used in the recreational fishing community, questions might require respondents to choose between management tools that would enable them to catch more fish versus those that would enable them to catch larger fish. The results of this approach will assist resource managers in determining which outcomes to manage for when it is not possible to manage for all desirable outcomes. Sanctuary staff facilitated contact with the recreational dive community and will review the survey instrument and provide feedback.

The March/April edition of *Underwater Magazine*, in 10 pages of coverage, carries the complete logs and full-color still images of an expedition last summer to the Gulf of Mexico. Titled

"Deep Sea Diary," it is the story of exploration of deepwater coral habitats as told by daily logs filed by scientists at sea and chronicled on NOAA's award winning web site of the Office of Ocean Exploration (oceanexplorer.noaa.gov). This expedition was jointly led by the sanctuary and the University of Southern Alabama. The article features numerous contributions by sanctuary staff. *Underwater Magazine* is the official publication of the Association of Diving Contractors International. Information about the magazine may be found at: <http://www.diveweb.com/uw/>

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

The University of Georgia Aquarium in Savannah has issued a request for proposals to establish an extensive Gray's Reef exhibit at their facility, which is on the same campus as the sanctuary administration office. The exhibit will have an in-depth sanctuary and sanctuary system message. Fernbank Natural History Museum in Atlanta is completing its Gray's Reef sanctuary exhibit revision.

The Savannah Morning News newspaper's education supplement is now available for distribution, along with the redesigned invertebrates of Gray's Reef sanctuary poster. The sanctuary has also produced a new poster featuring the loggerhead sea turtle.

The sanctuary took safety to heart during the first week of March with all eight staff members participating in an intense week's worth of hands-on safety programs. The entire sanctuary staff did everything from don full immersion suits and jump off a dock to simulate an emergency boat evacuation to fight small fires in the parking lot. The exercises took place just before the Gray's Reef field season began so there was particular emphasis on diver and boat safety. Each staff member was trained and certified in First Aid and CPR and diver accident management and oxygen administration. Later in the week, the sanctuary staff did a walk around of the sanctuary office building reviewing fire alarms, escape routes, hazardous materials protocol and safety lighting. Small fires of scrap paper were lit in the parking lot so staff could get experience using a variety of types of fire extinguishers.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

On February 11, the sanctuary held its seventh Biennial Workshop on Research. Over 70 abstracts were submitted relating to marine resource conservation, management and monitoring programs, and research and monitoring in bays and estuaries, coastal watersheds, and offshore and pelagic communities. The workshop report and abstracts are available at <http://farallones.noaa.gov/workshops/2004feb11/welcome.html>.

The sanctuary in conjunction with Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association presented "Exploring an Underwater Habitat by Submersible" to 60 young women over the course of three sessions at the Expanding Your Horizons conference at Skyline College in San Mateo. The conference was geared to young girls interested in careers in math and science. All 2000 participants received a National Marine Sanctuary brochure in their packets. This activity was created for LIMPETS in 2003 and compares two different habitats being studied on Cordell Bank.

On March 23, sanctuary staff held a meeting with local fishermen to gather input on a project to profile the historic fishing activities and communities in and around Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuaries. The profile will include information on actual numbers of boats actively engaged in each fishery, areas where the fishery is operating, gear types, catch levels, socio-economic profile of harbors and marinas, and an understanding of markets, changing gear types, and changing fisheries management regulations that influence this profile and the

community. This project is conducted by Ecotrust, in cooperation with Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay sanctuaries. The meeting reviewed the data available for this project, and participants provided advice on what questions can and will be answered and what analyses may be conducted.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

Four hundred volunteers gathered data from the shores of O'ahu, Kaua'i and the Big Island at Saturday's ninth annual Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Ocean Count to tally sightings and document surface behaviors of the endangered humpback whales. Volunteers collected data from 59 sites statewide. The numbers listed below represent the average number of whales sighted per 15-minute count period on each of the islands. Unusual weather conditions at certain sites may have affected the counts for this month.

Overall – 2 whales (includes all participating islands)

O'ahu – 3 whales

Kaua'i – 2 whales

Big Island – 1 whale

These volunteers were the last of over 200 people who were trained this season to conduct the ocean count on Kauai.

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary

On March 5-7, the sanctuary and The Mariners' Museum held the second annual "Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend." This event was co-sponsored by the Lincoln Forum. The weekend program included formal lectures, debates on the Civil War, tours, events for children, and the opening of the new *Monitor* exhibition titled "Ironclad Evidence," which focused on the artifacts from the *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia*. Sanctuary staff participated in a series of programs and events that included a reception for descendants of the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Virginia*, a panel discussion about the ironclad development during the American Civil War and a presentation about what it was like in the *Monitor's* gun turret in 1862 and 2002.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary has launched the new Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN) interactive mapping website to disseminate water quality monitoring location information (<http://mbnms-simon.org>). The site can be used for generating maps of watersheds, locating monitoring program information, linking to data sets at individual stations, downloading GIS layers, and more.

Sixty participants attended a Central Coast Water Quality Monitoring Workshop hosted by the sanctuary, the Resources Legacy Fund and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and were presented with matrices and maps summarizing monitoring programs in the sanctuary region. Speakers gave presentations on state, local and academic monitoring programs and results. Discussion focused on ways to improve coordination, information sharing, sampling and funding for water quality monitoring efforts, and highlighted a presentation on use of the Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN) as an interactive website tool for water quality information.

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Citizen Watershed Monitoring Network released to the public the Snapshot Day 2003 final report and the First Flush 2003 summary. Snapshot Day is a spring event in which over 120 streams are monitored for water quality from Pacifica to Morro Bay. First Flush is the first big rain of the season in which 17 storm-drain outfalls are monitored for pollutants and toxicity in urban runoff. Both events have taken place over the last four years.

Specific areas of concern have been identified and are described in the report on line at <http://montereybay.noaa.gov>.

On March 25, the sanctuary and interns for Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) hosted nine 6th– 8th grade students enrolled in the MERITO after-school program (Watershed Academy) at Rolling Hills Middle School and twelve 6th-8th grade students at Lakeview Middle School in Watsonville. Activities included a plankton tow at the Elkhorn Slough and microscope exploration of the collected specimens. This is one of three middle schools in the Pájaro Valley Unified School District implementing the MERITO watershed and ocean science field-based curriculum. The program provides students with hands-on field experiences related to watershed and marine conservation.

Rains on March 25th provided an opportunity for representatives from the sanctuary, Coastal Watershed Council, and the City of Santa Cruz to take water samples from the Bay Street monitoring site in order to determine the source of excessive foam production observed each year by volunteer samplers during the First Flush monitoring event. Potential sources of the foam may be buildup from residential car washing or more natural sources such as non-native vegetation. Sample results are still pending.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve

On April 2, the sanctuary premiered the documentary “Tragedies in the Mist.” The film premiere included the film, a chance for the public to meet the film’s executive producer John Brooks, and the Director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program Dan Basta, and to view three other short sanctuary films produced by Brooks. On April 3, the sanctuary manager showed the film at the Saginaw Dive Show. The film was also shown at the Alpena County Library on Sunday, April 4.

West Coast National Marine Sanctuaries

On Wednesday March 4th, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary hosted a workshop involving all five West Coast National Marine Sanctuaries (managers and research coordinators) and science team leads for NOAA’s Southwest and Northwest Fisheries Science Centers. The meeting focused on improving coordination and collaboration in ship time allocation and science/research on the West Coast.

National Marine Sanctuary Program

The first annual National Marine Sanctuary Program Safety Week was conducted at all field sites and at headquarters. It coincided with Admiral Lautenbacher’s Safety Memorandum that was sent to all NOAA employees on March 5, 2004. A variety of activities were planned. Facility safety activities included facility safety inspections, emergency evacuation plans, earthquake evacuation, fire safety, first aid/CPR, oxygen administration and replenishing first aid kits. Safe operation of government vehicles was also reviewed. Vessel safety activities included vessel orientation, use of emergency equipment, fire fighting, deployment of life rafts, man overboard drills, diver down rescue training, review of vessel policy, dive accident management, and many other activities. Sanctuary headquarters reviewed their safety procedures as well. Headquarters will be participating in first aid/CPR training in mid-April as well as updating the NMSP Emergency Preparedness Guide.

As part of the Program’s Feb. 23, National Safety Week, a two-day training of the Sanctuary Hazardous Incident Emergency Logistics Database (SHIELDS) was held at Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary in cooperation with the Office of Response and Restoration. Other attendees included representatives from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, the Quinault Indian Nation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Washington State Department of

Fish and Wildlife. SHIELDS is a new web-based suite of contingency plans and tools hosted on a secure Intranet, providing efficient access to numerous NOAA databases, GIS systems, charts and images providing on-demand information for making critical decisions about environmental tradeoffs during a response. Training modules included use of Incident Command System, health and safety issues, SHIELDS familiarization, and the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety Office's spill response tools and resources. The training also included two operational drills. Also introduced was the Resources and Undersea Threats database of shipwrecks and dumpsites. This database will facilitate contingency planning, underwater assessment and exploration, cultural resource management, navigation issues and emergency response operations.

On February 26, 2004, the Program announced that it will establish a Northern Management Area within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. This area extends from the San Mateo/Santa Cruz line northward to the existing boundary between the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. The current legal boundaries of the two sanctuaries will not be changed. The Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary assumed full management and administrative responsibilities of the NMA in March 2004. This issue has received significant attention from the members of Congress, area communities, local governments and the media for the last seven years.

On February 23 – 26, the Program held the 2004 Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting in Savannah, Georgia, hosted by Gray's Reef sanctuary. Participants included council coordinators from the eleven sites with councils, nine Council Chairs and/or Council representatives, staff from Gray's Reef sanctuary, the Flower Garden Banks Manager, and visits from Program Director Dan Basta and Deputy Director Michael Weiss. There were observers from the National Park Service, Parks Canada and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Subjects addressed include national issues of interest, the role of councils in a communications plan, case studies from each site with topics ranging from Joint Management Plan Review to constituent reports, Program policy development (such as cruise ships), and international presentations from Parks Canada and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Public comments were presented by The Ocean Conservancy, Blue Water Network and the International Council of Cruise Lines. This meeting was a harbinger to the program's continued and greater participation in the international marine conservation arena.

On March 9, the Program's Lisa Symons began her next rotation as part of NOAA's Leadership Competency Development Program with a three-month detail as Acting Deputy Director at NOAA's National Oceanographic Data Center.

The Program has distilled hundreds of comments from staff and Advisory Council members regarding potential amendments to the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Headquarters staff has met with General Counsel-Ocean Service to discuss how the reauthorization team has approached the challenges and has sought advice on the steps ahead, such as possibly drafting an Administration bill. Additionally, the Program is considering editorial updates and technical corrections to the Act.

Dan Basta worked with the Sanctuary Managers and headquarters staff preparing key messages to deliver during the annual Hill visits with Members and staff. Sanctuary briefing materials were presented during the visits to inform the Members of the sanctuary-wide accomplishments and the forecast of the events ahead. These briefings were conducted in conjunction with the Annual Coastal Program Managers Meeting.

The Program hosted the board members of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) on March 18, 2004 at the Channel Islands sanctuary. This event coincided with the AZA

Board meeting, which was held in Santa Barbara, and will kick-off the partnership between the AZA and the Program. The partnership was formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement signed in late fall 2003. The AZA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation, with 213 member institutions. Approximately 30 members are aquaria, another 20 are combined zoos and aquaria, the rest are zoos. The institutions receive 142 million visitors annually. The AZA Board membership is composed of directors from 15 of aquaria and zoo institutions from around the country, including the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Steinhardt Aquarium in San Francisco, New York Aquarium in Brooklyn, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and Disney's Animal Kingdom. The Program is looking to increase public awareness of the sanctuaries through sanctuary educational programs and exhibits displayed AZA member institutions.

Program staff worked with the staff of the Northwestern Hawaiian Island Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (NWHI) to release the draft Final Reserve Operations Plan for the Reserve, which is available for public review until May 15. Headquarters and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands staff worked on further refinement of alternatives related to possible fishing regulations for the proposed national marine sanctuary. Preparations are underway to publish and release the Reserve Operations Plan for public review.

NOAA Fisheries and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary staff hosted a workshop titled, "Watching Wild Dolphins: Keeping Your Trips Legal and Safe," on March 10 at the Harvey Government Center in Key West. Speakers from the NOAA Office of Protected Species, Office of Law Enforcement and the National Marine Sanctuary Program answered questions about how to legally and safely view wild dolphins. The history of boat-based dolphin viewing near Key West, regulations and guidelines for wild dolphin viewing based on the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and how the Act is enforced were also topics of discussion.

On February 20, the National Marine Sanctuary Program's Education Team sponsored a two-day "Dive into Education" marine science education workshop, a professional development workshop for eighty-five K-12 teachers in Hawaii. Educators representing fourteen different marine protected areas of the National Marine Sanctuary Program provided thirty-six sessions aimed at providing teachers with the knowledge and resources necessary to bring marine science into Hawaii classrooms. The workshop was a huge success with 93% of the participants rated the event among the best professional development opportunities available, with over half stating that this workshop was one of the best workshops they have ever attended. Ninety five percent of the participants said that they are now very likely to integrate marine science into their classrooms as a direct result of the Dive into Education workshop.

The Program is planning a special event on June 17, 2004, in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary during which a geodetic marker will be placed at a recently restored coral reef. The installation of the marker will be filmed, and viewed live topside. The event will take place off Key Largo where the *Wellwood*, a 122-meter Cypriot-registered freighter, ran aground in 1984, crushing 5,805 square meters of living corals. The event will take place on a glass-bottom boat over the site where sanctuary divers will place the marker. A press conference will be held to deliver the message that responsible boating is paramount to protecting our resources. NOAA will also demonstrate the ability to calibrate a global positional survey unit while at sea.

The Program has been working with NOAA and Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) on an event planned for April 17, 2004, marking the transfer of the 29-foot Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary *R/V Hawk* to ECSU for use by their Department of Geological, Environmental and Marine Sciences. Tim Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, and ECSU's Chancellor Mickey Burnim will preside over the 'official key transfer' of the vessel. The event will occur in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Local officials and media will be invited.

